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Farm Broadcasters Letter



Letter No. 2254

March 20, 1986

PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS HIGHLIGHTS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports the planting intentions of 45,000 growers, as of March 7. Farmers intent to plant 78.1 million acres of corn, down 6 pct. from last year and 3 pct. from 1984. The prospective soybean plantings are at 62 million acres, the smallest planted acreage since 1977 and down 2 pct. from 1985. Growers intend to plant 15.9 million acres of sorghum, down 13 pct. from 1985. Producers intend to plant 12.9 million acres of barley in 1986, down 2 pct. from last year. Durum wheat acreage is expected to be down 9 pct. from 1985 to 2.92 million acres. Other spring wheat prospective plantings, at 14.2 million acres, are 3 pct. lower than last year.

JORDAN ELIGIBLE FOR EXPORT ENHANCEMENT

Sec'y of Agriculture Richard Lyng announced a wheat offer to Jordan, that will be the nineteenth initiative under the USDA's Export Enhancement Program. Sales will be made at competitive world prices. This program will give U.S. exporters the opportunity to sell up to 75,000 metric tons of wheat. The sales will be subsidized with wheat from the Commodity Credit Corporation's inventory.

FOOD PRICE INCREASES TO BE SMALL

The Consumer Price Index for food in 1986 is forecast to rise 2 to 4 pct. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the small size of the increase stems from large supplies of many farm foods and low general inflation. The new farm bill is expected to lower market prices for wheat, corn and rice and dampen price gains for products made from them.

MORE U.S. SOYBEANS TO USSR

The USSR increased its purchases of U.S. soybeans in Feb./Mar., according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The total purchases to date are a record 1.4 million tons. Total Soviet imports of soybeans in 1985/86 have been increased to 2 million tons, bringing Soviet soybean meal consumption to 2.3 million tons--up sharply from last year's low level.

CATTLE ON FEED DOWN

Cattle and calves on feed Mar. 1, 1986, for the slaughter market in the 7 States preparing monthly estimates totaled 7.26 million head, down 8 pct. from a year ago and 3 pct. below March 1, 1984, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Marketings of fed cattle during Feb. totaled 1.47 million, a decrease of 5 pct. from last year and 9 pct. below Feb. 1984.

AUSTRALIA'S
WHEAT SUPPORT

The Australian Wheat Board has set the 1985 guaranteed minimum price for Standard White wheat at 149.87 Australian dollars per ton (105 U.S. dollars). Given currently declining wheat prices and the 27 pct. decrease in the 1986 U.S. wheat loan rate, the Australian minimum price is higher than had been expected, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In U.S. dollar terms, the new price represents about a 3-pct. decline from last year's level of U.S. \$108 per ton.

U.S. AG TRADE
UPDATE

Agricultural exports of the U.S. during Oct.-Jan. 1986 totaled \$10.3 billion, down \$2.8 billion, or 21 pct., from Oct.-Jan. 1985, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Export volume so far in fiscal 1986 totaled 44.9 million tons, down 17 pct. from the 54.2 million exported during the same period of fiscal 1985. Agricultural exports during Jan. 1986, totaled \$2.54 billion, down \$593 million, or 19 pct., from Jan. 1985, and 4 pct. below the \$2.64 billion exported in Dec. 1985. Export volume for Jan. totaled 11.2 million tons, down nearly 15 pct. from the 13.2 million of Jan. 1985. The sharpest year-to-year value declines in exports so far in fiscal 1986 have been in wheat, corn, cotton and grain sorghum.

WORLD OILSEED
FORECAST

The March forecast by the U.S. Department of Agriculture of the 1985/86 world oilseed production is placed at 194.4 million metric tons, virtually unchanged from last month. A 6 pct. increase in palm kernel production and smaller increases in peanut and cottonseed production overrode a 3 pct. decline in flaxseed production. Copra, rapeseed, soybean and sunflowerseed production registered little or no change.

EXTENSION SERVICE
FUNDS TO HELP
FARMERS

Many financially distressed farmers and ranchers can get a helping hand from their local Cooperative Extension offices in fiscal 1986, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This is due in part to a \$1.4 million program funded by special congressional appropriations. The projects focus on providing intensive farm financial management assistance and associated stress counseling. Extension awarded funds to projects in 18 States: Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Tennessee. Multi-state projects in Minnesota and Oregon were also funded.

DAIRY OUTLOOK

1986 may be the turning point for dairy, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Milk production and commercial use are expected to post large increases and the surplus will be heavy, a situation apparently similar to last year. But annual totals might mask forces set in motion during the year that could result in 1986 being a turning point. Effective returns to dairying will be squeezed further, and the buyout program will start to reduce milk production. This might enable commercial use to start winning the race with production. Retail dairy prices are expected to decline slightly, implying a larger drop in real prices than in most recent years.

FROM OUR
TELEVISION
SERVICE

OILSEED OUTLOOK... USDA economist Roger Hoskin focuses on the current soybean situation and outlook, including domestic meal demand, exports and the outlook for acreage response to the 1985 farm bill. Vic Powell interviews. (146)

SUGARS AND SWEETENERS OUTLOOK... The impact of the beverage industry's switch from sugar to high fructose corn syrup is still being felt. Sugar deliveries last year were down five percent, continuing the decline that began in 1977. USDA economist David Harvey examines the current sugars and sweeteners outlook. Vic Powell interviews. (147)

AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK... Food price increases are expected to be small again, as the Consumer Price Index for food in 1986 is forecast to rise two to four percent. USDA economist Herb Moses talks about these and other factors contributing to the current agricultural outlook. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (148)

CONTROLLING PINK BOLLWORM... USDA research scientist Tom Henneberry talks about research work currently being conducted to study the use of insects to control pink bollworms. Vic Powell interviews. (149)

ENHANCING CORN QUALITY... Marvin Steinberg, University of Illinois, focuses on efforts to maintain and enhance corn quality in the export process, including controlling mold growth. Gary Beaumont interviews. (150)



FROM OUR RADIO
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1503... (Weekly 13½ min documentary) On this edition of Agriculture USA, Gary Crawford talks to Forest Service experts about some of the latest methods in preventing forest fires. One of those includes starting controlled forest fires.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1492... (Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; The Homestead Program; The grasshoppers are coming; Fast mastitis treatment; Ag outlook.

CONSUMER TIME #985... (Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) Growing grass in the shade; More sodas less milk; Seeds or transplants; Monitoring fat in the diet; Saving energy in the kitchen.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE... Thurs, Apr. 10, Crop production report; Tues, Apr. 15, Weekly weather and crop summary; Wed, Apr. 16, Milk production report. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. EST each working day.

OFF MIKE

First a bit of housekeeping. Florence Kelly (USDA Radio-TV secretary) made some changes to this newsletter's mailing list, then learned later the computer was sick and hadn't accepted any of the changes. Unfortunately, Florence no longer has the information. So, if you requested a change recently, please send it in again ... Tony Purcell (Mid Amer Ag Net, Wichita, KS) reports Mike Dain is now program director for Larry Steckline's stations and his place on the ag net has been filled by Ted Werbine. Ted also is involved in reporting news and sports for the new Mid America News Network ... Mark Vail (Kansas Ag Net, Topeka, KS) reports Rich Hull (same net) is on a 2 month Jefferson Fellowship Program at the East-West Center in Hawaii. He spends 3 weeks in Hawaii, then a month in Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong and China then returns to Hawaii. Incidentally, congratulations are in order for Mark. He's a new poppa, first time, too. Her name is Sarah, and she was born premature on Feb. 15. Mother and daughter are both doing fine ... We learn that past NAFB president Johnnie Hood (WPTF/Southern Farm Net, Raleigh, NC) recently received the Meritorious Service Award from the North Carolina Soybean Growers Assn. Our congratulations! ... Same goes to Mike Wiles (KTTS, Springfield, MO). He and KTTS recently received the Missouri Pork Producers Assn 1985 Media Award. Mike also was named an honorary member of the Missouri Young Farmers and Young Farm Wives Assn ... Call from Ron Arp (KWHT, Pendleton, OR) brought some fascinating information. Pendleton is known as the Roundup City for its famous Pendleton Roundup. However, Ron says the most recent "event" was the "Great American Hamster Race!." Two auto dealers turned hamster exercise wheels into cars, put hamsters inside the wheels and had a race. Ron did "color" for the play-by-play announcer. Wow! ...


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